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ABSTRACT

The adversary relationship between teacher education faculty and administration is examined from the perspective of interdependence, and suggestions are made to promote open cooperation between the two groups. First, the mission of the teacher education branch of the institution needs to be developed, and made explicit, with regard to priorities that can readily be translated into budget considerations and into criteria for faculty advancement. Secondly, the institution must find ways to help each faculty member succeed in individual goal attainment. The role of the tenured professor is seen as that of the nurturing and encouraging colleague whose main purpose is to help others grow and advance in their professional lives. (JD)

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"The Selection and Nurturing of Teacher Education Faculty"
from the tenured professor's point of view

Sam P. Wiggins

(Summary of presentation in "Strand" session of
AACTE Conference in Detroit, Michigan on
February 19, 1981)

- other points of view were those of a full time administrator, a beginning assistant professor and a field centered "unranked" teacher education center coordinator.

The traditional relationship between a teacher education faculty and its administration was, however, congenial, a parent child relationship. The faculty acquiesced in the face of administrative decisions, hoping at best for an attentive "hearing" of their complaints and "suggestions." All the while, there was a pretense, or thinly veiled "gamesmanship" in which the faculty claimed the "curriculum" as its turf, abdicating the management - and budgeting affairs - to the administration. Over a period of time, accelerated by the collective bargaining movement, a "parent against parent" relationship evolved, in which the somewhat mythical "collegial" relationship was exposed. With the emergence of this confrontation strategy, however, the ploys of gamesmanship continued, with only the name and the rules of the game changing. The strong continued to exploit the weak, whether faculty or administration, taking the classical stance characterized in Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis as "We're OK - You're Not OK." Those were not the words being used, but the non-verbal behavior came through loud and clear.

Many institutions are honestly striving now, with a more accurate perspective of interdependence, to realize that the teacher education faculty

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and administration have more to gain from open cooperation than from clandestine gamesmanship. In that context we see, as well, that whatever our particular roles, whether dean, tenured, or non-tenured professor, all of us have a clear responsibility for the encouragement, assistance and nurturing of our teacher education colleagues, both above, alongside and below us in the organizational "pecking order" of higher education. We should be exemplifying - use the TA buzz words once again - the ego state of adult to adult - a non-critical rational outlook - and the life position of "I'm OK - You're OK."

From the vantage point of the tenured professor, with the joys and temptations inherent in that enviable state, three basic propositions emerge.

First of all, the mission of the teacher education arm of the institution needs to be developed, and made explicit, with regard to priorities that can readily be translated into budget considerations and into criteria for faculty advancement. In this process, although certain concepts may be helpful as guideposts in the process, such as "management by objectives" or "Professional Growth Goals," we must not become trapped by an externally imposed mechanistic system that has a chafing effect upon the faculty in these efforts. In simplest terms, each faculty department should have a responsible voice in overall policy development in budget making with clear cut checks and balances against its human self-interest proclivities. At the individual level, all faculty members should develop, in consultation with their department chairperson, their annual professional goals, in teaching, research and/or professional service. These goal statements should be reviewed near the end of the year, based upon both hard and soft data, and this evaluation should serve both as criteria for annual salary review and for institutional review for promotion and/or tenure. To be achieving well by one set of

departmental criteria, only to be denied advancement and career security at another level in the hierarchy by other standards is anathema to faculty morale and to growth in teacher education. These "goals," by the way, must make room for individual career interests as well as for immediate institutional needs. Unless an "OK" balance can be struck at this point, the long range effect of such short-sightedness can eventually rise to haunt the institution.

Secondly, the institution must find ways to help each faculty member succeed in goal attainment. It is not enough to agree upon such goals as "demonstrably effective teaching," "acquisition of contracts and grants," and "published articles in refereed journals." Doctoral programs, alas, are all too often remiss in developing the competencies of future professors in just such predictable needs. The staff development program must build in a system of maximizing success. Yet, many anxiety ridden administrators, worried about having too high a percentage of tenured professors with whom they may get stuck, are counting upon enough faculty dropouts, i.e., failures, to keep the system operating in lean times as well as the feasting years. What is needed in institutional futures planning, of course, is an honest-to-goodness plan which a) anticipates foreseeable lean years, b) devises a plan for recruiting new audiences, c) activates a retraining and redeployment plan, and d) establishes criteria for terminating appointments as conditions of austerity require. Again, the "parent" administration sees the problem and its solution as its "territory," rather than putting the issue on the teacher education table for a truly shared resolution.

This responsibility for helping faculty and administrators to achieve their goals is not solely that of deans and department chairmen. Any member of the team should demonstrate a willingness to help others along the way

where the need exists and he or she can appropriately be of aid. Nobody is "off the hook" and free to find others as the scapegoats.

Thirdly, and finally, we come to the role of the tenured professor. (Why we must always call such a person full is not fully clear to me. A professor is a professor.) Abraham Maslow, as many readers will recall, introduced the term "self-actualization" to people who had managed to attain both their physiological and basic psychological needs. Having attained that blissful state of Nirvana, or something akin to it, Maslow believed that we then become self-fulfilling, creative - "self-actualizing," reaching a kind of penultimate state of productivity. He first arrived at that conclusion as he studied the behavior of some of his favorite university professors, such as the eminent cultural anthropologist, Ruth Benedict.

If Maslow had studied the "universe" of the population of tenured professors, however, I suspect that he would have found three general clusters of them. H is for Huckster. The established professor may spend less and less time at the home university, cultivating consultantships for fixed extra fees under the misnombre of "honorarium" (an honorary gift or payment for services where no fee has been set or is legally collectible). He can flaunt his tenure at the university, call it academic freedom and remind the dean that consultant work was a criterion for promotion as a visible evidence of "national reputation" - the worm has turned.

Or,...there is V for Vegetable. The tenured professor can now sit back and repose - or cultivate his garden, and claim that this is mental health activity for better teaching. Or he can become president of the lawn croquet association, explaining that this is his/her form of community service, as an informal avenue of building a good image of public education. Vegetation is a contagious disease, and administrators without faculty support

are hard pressed to arrest its growth. They are hard pressed, as well, to nurture the growth of junior faculty in the face of examples of inequity and negative models of educational zest.

Thirdly, and back to Maslow, many tenured professors do find the joys of creative activity, blending constructively their efforts to contribute to the fulfillment of institutional goals and their own deferred professional goals. Such a professor, no longer constrained by the artificial goading to climb the professional ladder, can now assist others in their efforts. In this "self-actualizing" role, the tenured professor finally becomes what all members of the team should focus on - if somehow the mission of the institution and the goals of each individual teacher education could achieve their congruence.

The nurturing of teacher education faculty should be a main order of business of the tenured professor, and those who shirk that responsibility have forfeited their right to the cloak of professorial immunity.